

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3927

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0489

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, AG

SUBJECT: BOMBING OF ALGERIAN INSTALLATIONS IN FRANCE

REF: ALGIERS 0461

1. IN CONVERSATION FEB 23 CONCERNING BOMBING IN FRANCE, FRENCH POLITICAL OFFICER HERE SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND SAID "WHAT CAN WE DO HERE?" HE SAID HE HAS IMPRESSION ALGERIANS NOT BEING AS UNPLEASANT AS THEY COULD BE. HE SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, PRESS COMMENT, WHILE HEATED, NO MORE THAN FRENCH OFTEN GET. HE POINTED OUT THAT FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY DIRECTOR OF FRENCH AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, NOT EVEN BY SECGEN. IN PRESENTATION TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR ALGERIANS MADE NO REFERENCE TO ALLEGED LINK BETWEEN BOMBINGS IN ALGERIA AND BOMBING IN FRANCE, LIMITING THEMSELVES TO DEMANDING THAT GOF TAKE BETTER SECURITY MEASURES TO PROTECT ALGERIAN INSTALLATIONS. FRENCH EMBOFF SAID HE HAD TO AGREE WITH ALGERIANS, ESPECIALLY IN CASE OF ALGERIAN PARIS TOURIST OFFICE, WHERE BOMB DISMANTLED ON FEB 20 BUT ANOTHER ONE PLANTED AND DID GO OFF FEB 22.

2. CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY, FRENCH EMBOFF WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT ANY GROUP HAD YET CLAIMED CREDIT FOR BOMBINGS. UNTIL THEY DO, HE SAID, FRENCH WERE NOT EVEN PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS IN FACT WORK OF SOA. HE SAID
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THAT GOF HAD ALREADY LEVIED INTERDICTION DE SEJOUR ON SOA

CHIEF KAOUNE BUT THAT THESE HAVE IN PAST PROVED DIFFICULT TO E FORCE. EMBASSY HERE HAS NOT YET RECEIVED RESPONSE FROM QUAI TO GIVE TO ALGERIANS; HE NOT SURE IT WOULD EVER GET ONE.

3. ON SATURDAY FOLLOWING BOMBINGS ALGERIAN POLICE VAN WAS STATIONED AT FRENCH EMBASSY FOR ENTIRE DAY BUT THEN RETREATED; FRENCH EMBOFF EXPRESSED OPINION THAT PRESENCE OF VAN DESIGNED MORE TO BRING ALGERIAN CONCERN HOME TO FRENCH THAN TO PROVIDE PROTECTION. HE STATED THAT FRENCH EMBASSY ITSELF IS TAKING INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES.

4. IN RESPONSE TO SPECULATION THAT BOMBINGS COORDINATED TO OCCUR JUST PRIOR MITTERAND VISIT TO ALGERIA, JUST AS SIMILAR BOMBINGS TOOK PLACE BEFORE GISCARD VISIT LAST SPRING, FRENCH EMBOFF TENDED TO DISMISS IDEA BUT ADMITTED IT COULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED ENTIRELY.

5. ALTHOUGH IT HARD TO BELIEVE FRENCH EMBASSY NOT BETTER

INFORMED, FRENCH HERE USUALLY EXTREMELY COOPERATIVE AND OPEN IN EXCHANGING INFORMATION. IN ANY CASE, MITTERAND ARRIVED ALGIERS FEB 24 AND VISIT PROCEEDING NORMALLY AND WITHOUT UNDUE FANFARE. FRENCH EMBASSY TELLS US MITTERAND HAS NEVER OFFICIALLLY INFORMED 17-8 OF HIS VISIT AND THEREFORE FRENCH EMBASSY NOT PLANNING EXERCISE ITSELF ON MITTERAND BEHALF. FRENCH MINISTER COUNSELOR WENT TO AIRPORT TO SHAKE MITTERAND'S HAND AND OFFER ASSISTANCE IF NEEDED BUT THAT TOTAL EXTENT OF PLANNED FRENCH EMBASSY EFFORT. PARKER

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